

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 325

Commemorating the 9th anniversary of the attack on the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and highlighting the attack as characteristic of the threat to the United States from radical Islamic organizations operating from Latin America.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 18, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. BALLENGER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ACKERMAN, and Mr. CROWLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 9th anniversary of the attack on the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and highlighting the attack as characteristic of the threat to the United States from radical Islamic organizations operating from Latin America.

Whereas on July 18, 1994, 85 innocent people were killed and 300 were wounded when the AMIA Jewish Community Center was bombed in Buenos Aires, Argentina;

Whereas the attacks against the Jewish community in Argentina show the same cowardice that the United States saw on September 11, 2001;

Whereas failure to duly punish the culprits of these acts serves to reward terrorists and help spread terrorism throughout the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas under President Nestor Kirchner's order, 14 current and former members of the intelligence agency will be relieved of their responsibility to retain "State secrecy" in the case, and will be free to testify on the ongoing criminal trial for the first time;

Whereas substantial evidence attributes the attack on July 18, 1994, to the terrorist group Hizballah, based in Lebanon and sponsored by Iran;

Whereas the Argentine judge hearing the AMLA case has issued international arrest warrants for four Iranian government officials believed to have been involved in planning or carrying out the attack against the AMLA;

Whereas those indicted include Imad Mugniyeh, who reportedly works for Iran's Ministry of Information and Security (MOIS) and lives in Iran; Mohsen Rabbani, a cultural attache at the Iranian Embassy in Argentina; Barat Ali Balesh-Abadi, an Iranian Diplomat; Ali Akbar Parvaresh, a former education minister; and Ali Fallahian, the former MOIS minister;

Whereas evidence indicates that the tri-border region where Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil meet was used to channel resources for the purpose of carrying out the AMLA attack by terrorists linked with Iran;

Whereas on March 17, 1992, terrorists bombed the Embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 29 persons and injuring more than 200 others, and the Government of Argentina has not yet brought anyone to justice for that act of terrorism;

Whereas according to the 2003 Patterns of Global Terrorism, the tri-border region has long been depicted as a regional nucleus for fundraising activities, arms and drug trafficking, contraband smuggling, document and currency fraud, money laundering, and the manufacture and movement of pirated goods by terrorists linked with Iran;

Whereas the State Department's report Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001 identifies Lebanese-based terrorist organization Hizballah, as well as other terrorist groups, in the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, "where terrorists raise millions of dollars annually via criminal enterprises.";

Whereas such report states that "[t]here is evidence of the presence of Hizballah members or sympathizers in other areas of Latin America as well: In northern Chile, especially around Iquique; in Maicao, Colombia, near the border with Venezuela; on Margarita Island in Venezuela; and in Panama's Colon Free Trade Zone";

Whereas agents from Argentina's intelligence agency have reported to the United States that operatives from al-Qaida were based in the Tri-Border region, and the agents noted that suspected terrorists had passed through the area, among them was a member of Gammaa al-Islamiya, a terrorist cell tied to al-Qaida;

Whereas United States Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage testified on September 19, 2002, before a joint hearing on Iraq of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate that Hizballah now has a capacity similar to al-Qaida to attack the United States and that Hizballah is present in South America;

Whereas the State Department's annual report, Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003, notes that while Latin America has not been the focal point in the war on terrorism, countries in the region have struggled with domestic terrorism for decades and international terrorist groups have at times used the region as a battleground to advance their causes;

Whereas police in Asuncion, Paraguay, have arrested a relative of Assad Barakat, the Chief of Hizballah in South America, with almost five pounds of cocaine hidden in an electric piano that he allegedly intended to smuggle into Syria;

Whereas the Caribbean is a strategic paradise for terrorist organizations, given its established web for drugs, arms contraband, and money laundering;

Whereas the Department of State includes Cuba in its list of seven states sponsoring terrorism and Cuba maintains close relations with countries that sponsor terrorism and has given safe haven to members of European terrorist groups;

Whereas terrorist organizations may be involved in money laundering as a means of hiding their financial assets and in light of that information, as of June 2003, several nations in the region—Guatemala, St. Vincent, and the Grenadines—were identified by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as non-cooperative countries in the fight against money laundering;

Whereas much of the Western Hemisphere, from Canada to Tierra del Fuego, is ideal for international terrorist groups to establish bases due to the ill equipped and poorly trained security agencies across the region;

Whereas according to the Department of State's March 2003 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 14 nations in South America and the Caribbean are jurisdictions of primary concern to the United States because of their vulnerability to money laundering, while many nations in the region are characterized as jurisdictions of concern;

Whereas the fight against terrorism must remain a top priority. Nowhere is this more true than in America's backyard;

Whereas according to Mr. Miguel Toma, who directs the Argentine equivalent to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "there is a direct correlation between terrorism here [in South America] and the United States";

Whereas Mr. Toma has met with United States intelligence officials to discuss the possibility of a new terrorist offensive launched from Latin America;

Whereas al-Qaida's desire to bring the battle to the United States would make the proximity of Latin America all the more appealing;

Whereas cooperation is indispensable for success in the war on terrorism;

Whereas it is in the best interest of the region to live up to the Declaration by the Organization of American States on September 21, 2001, "Individually and collectively, we will deny terrorist groups the capacity to operate in this Hemisphere. This American family stands United;"; and

Whereas it is the long standing policy of the United States to stand firm against terrorist attacks wherever and whenever they occur and to work with its allies to ensure that justice is done: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reiterates its condemnation of the attack on
3 the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos
4 Aires, Argentina on July 18, 1994, and honors the
5 victims of this heinous act;

6 (2) strongly urges the Government of Argentina
7 to further fulfill its international obligations and its
8 promise to the Argentine people by pursuing the
9 local and international connections to this act of ter-
10 rorism, wherever it may lead, and to properly punish
11 all those who are involved;

12 (3) welcomes Argentine President Nestor
13 Kirchner's political will to pursue the investigation
14 of the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community
15 Center to its ultimate conclusions;

16 (4) calls on the President of the United States
17 to raise this issue in bilateral discussions with Ar-
18 gentine officials and to underscore the United States
19 concern regarding the past delay in the resolution of
20 this case;

21 (5) recommends that the President of the
22 United States create more mechanisms for intra-re-
23 gional information sharing and, where needed, joint
24 counter-terrorism operations;

1 (6) strongly encourages the President of the
2 United States to provide democratic governments in
3 South America and Central America with the nec-
4 essary financial resources as well as equipment and
5 training for intelligence and security forces;

6 (7) encourages the President of the United
7 States to execute his commitment vis-a-vis the West-
8 ern Hemisphere to “direct every resource at our
9 command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of
10 intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement;
11 every financial influence, and every necessary weap-
12 on of war—to the disruption and to the defeat of the
13 global terror network”;

14 (8) recommends that the United States Rep-
15 resentative to the Organization of American States
16 seek support from the countries comprising the
17 Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism to as-
18 sist, if needed, in the investigation of this terrorist
19 attack;

20 (9) desires a lasting, warm relationship between
21 the United States and Argentina built on mutual ab-
22 horrence of terrorism and commitments to peace,
23 stability, and democracy in the Western Hemisphere;

24 (10) calls on all governments in the Western
25 Hemisphere to pursue an anti-terrorism campaign

1 based on unity of purpose, dedication of resources,
2 constant vigilance, and cooperation;

3 (11) calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to fa-
4 vorably respond to the Argentine arrest warrant for
5 five Iranian citizens believed to be responsible for
6 the 1994 attack on the AMIA; and

7 (12) calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to
8 cease any and all assistance to terrorist organiza-
9 tions, and to renounce to any and all involvement
10 with terrorism.

11 SEC. 2. The Secretary of the House of Representa-
12 tives shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Presi-
13 dent, the United States Senate, the United States Perma-
14 nent Representative to the United Nations, and the
15 United States Permanent Representative to the Organiza-
16 tion of American States.

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